

ECONOMIC



O P P O R T U N I T Y F O R A L L

"The Plan is in place.

Now it is time for action.

**Economic opportunity for
all will be forged by
disciplined, coordinated,
economic development
decisions."**

— Charles Mason,

Chair, Business Growth and Workforce
Development Task Force

The forces of new technology, the global economy, and immigration are weaving a new economic and social fabric in Long Beach. As this happens, our city has the opportunity to emerge as a leading center of the new economy.

Less than 10 years ago, a number of factors—the Boeing downsizing, the closure of both the Naval Station and Naval Shipyard, and the state's fiscal crisis—shook Long Beach's economic stability. But we have emerged better positioned than most Southern California cities to compete in the 21st century.

Our strategy was to develop a more diversified economy, based on our community's strengths: trade, tourism, technology, and retail. These four elements became pillars of a new economic foundation for our city. Now, we can build on them—harnessing the new ideas and dynamic energy of our growing population and the entrepreneurs who are creating the knowledge-based economy.

Goal 1: Encourage business development based on our strengths

Long Beach must develop a "business friendly" reputation for aggressive, progressive, and fair business services. "Aggressive" policies are those that convince businesses to come to Long Beach. "Progressive" practices are those that are proven to help businesses succeed. And "fair" ways of taxing, licensing, and giving information are those that encourage businesses to locate and participate in our community with pride.

Long Beach already possesses the talent and creativity to prosper in the new global network—we should continue to build on the solid foundation developed in the last decade. Action steps:

- Develop a comprehensive economic development plan to be overseen by the Economic Development Commission.
- Complete the Queensway Bay Project and create other tourist attractions.
- Assemble teams of business leaders and City officials through public/private partnerships, such as Strategic Marketing Inc., to identify and attract new businesses and retain current businesses.
- Provide incentives for specific industries to locate in Long Beach: international trade, healthcare, knowledge-based technology, and other high-paying growth sectors.
- Use re-zoning and in-fill development to preserve and expand the industrial sector.
- Develop and lease Port facilities that make efficient use of Port land.

- Develop a strategy for land use at the airport that maximizes the economic return to the community.
- Implement policies and train staff to recognize the value of "business friendly" customer-service practices.
- Foster the local visual and performing arts to strengthen our city's reputation as a regional art and cultural center.

Goal 2: Create a Work Force Development Plan to promote better jobs and wages

We need a skilled work force to attract and keep businesses and industry. That calls for education, training, and resources for all workers, including those with limited skills. Action steps:

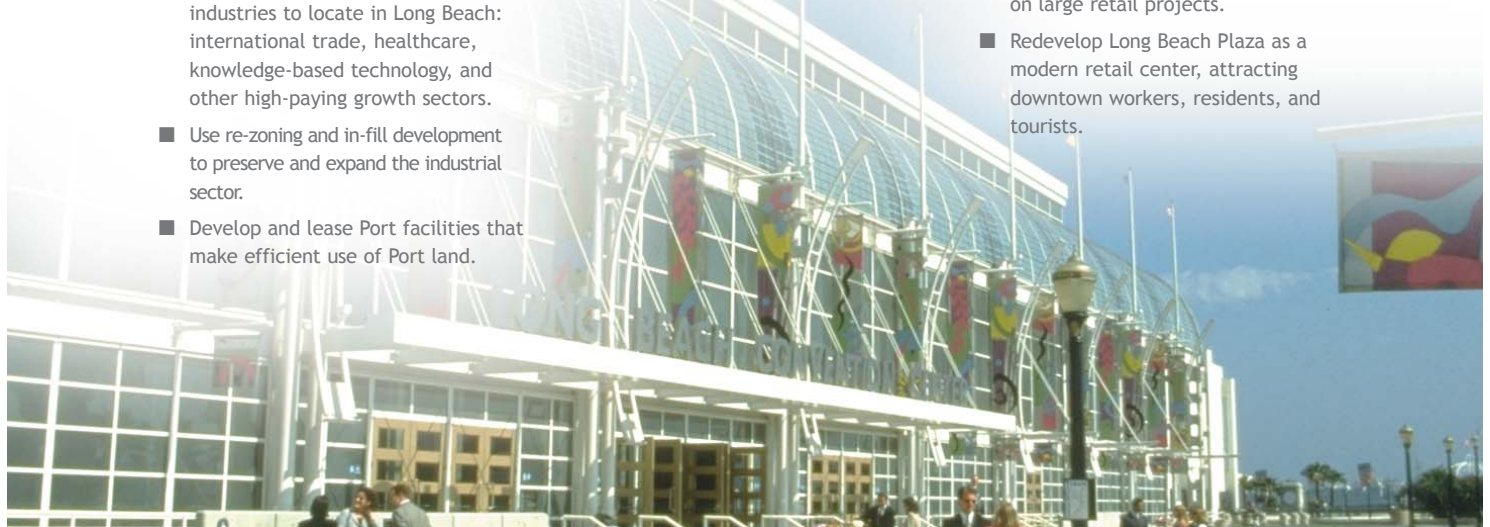
- Develop a collaborative committee of all workforce stakeholders to create a plan to meet these milestones:
 1. Cut unemployment in half within five years in areas of high unemployment;
 2. Increase the number of students completing core math and science classes by 10 percent each year;
 3. Increase computer literacy in all parts of our community by 25 percent; and
 4. Improve business satisfaction with work force development services by 10 percent each year.

- Provide training in all areas with skill shortages and develop qualified applicants for hard-to-fill positions.
- Provide accessible support services to everyone, especially the unemployed, working poor, and unskilled; evaluate service providers and eliminate those that are not effective.
- Develop mechanisms to assess workforce opportunities and industry groups that can create at least 10 training and employment pathways each year.
- Prioritize public funding according to return on investment.
- Assess a minimum wage and benefits requirement in contracts for City services in the context of the study of a marketization program.

Goal 3: Balance business growth and neighborhood needs

The need for business to expand can conflict with quality of life in our neighborhoods. But with new technology and cleaner industrial processes, business growth does not necessarily mean more noise and pollution. Action steps:

- Develop a citywide neighborhood plan for business development that ensures the quality of life in the neighborhoods.
- Revitalize shopping districts serving neighborhoods, rather than focusing on large retail projects.
- Redevelop Long Beach Plaza as a modern retail center, attracting downtown workers, residents, and tourists.



- Continue to strengthen the Pine Avenue and Promenade dining, entertainment and retail areas, linking them with the Long Beach Plaza and Queensway Bay developments.
- Expand Long Beach Airport business opportunities, but only within existing noise ordinances.
- Pursue the strategies in the 1998 Empowerment Zone application.
- Take a leadership role with the Southern California Association of Governments to address future airport capacity needs of the region—maintaining noise and environmental limits at the Long Beach airport.

Goal 4: Encourage small business growth.

The economy of the future will rely increasingly on innovative, small service businesses. These businesses, especially those started by more recent residents, must be supported by increased access to financing, planning, and customers to succeed in the new marketplace. Action steps:

- Use Community Development Impact Teams that combine City bureaus to coordinate efforts to assist small businesses in underserved areas and neighborhoods through the new neighborhood technology centers.
- Provide a system of support services to small businesses in targeted industries.
- Create non-bank financing and community development corporations to nurture inner-city businesses.
- Create physical and electronic business assistance centers at the neighborhood resource centers or other neighborhood locations (see sidebar).

- Study aging strip centers and commercial corridors for revitalization and expand the City's Façade Improvement programs.
- Coordinate business assistance services to existing commercial centers with property managers and real estate brokers.

Goal 5: Deliver needed City services and infrastructure to businesses in the most cost-effective manner

We need to establish a dedicated source of funding for City infrastructure repair and capital improvements rather than paying for deferred maintenance through moneys in the general fund. This will reassure businesses about our long-term stability and commitment to quality of life for residents and workers. Action steps:

- Establish a dedicated source of funds for infrastructure maintenance and capital improvements.
- Explore state revenue sharing based on population and economic activity and support legislation to distribute sales tax to cities based on population.
- Regularly review contract services.
- Expand services to other cities and towns for a fee.
- Continue the current policy of maintaining a stable budget with a reserve of at least 10 percent of the operating budget.
- Require the Economic Development Commission to provide annual data on the City's economic development performance.

technology and small business

A cornerstone of the Long Beach Strategic Plan is an envisioned network of citywide neighborhood technology centers, each containing up-to-date information technology—including hardware, software, internet and email access, and video and audio conferencing.

For workers, these centers will offer tools for training, job-seeking, and career advancement.

For youth, the centers will also offer employment and volunteer opportunities and job preparation resources.

For small businesses, these centers can provide one-stop assistance in training, business development, coaching, technical help, grant and loan information, and city, state, and federal requirements for specific industries.